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Sirs

The Directed Energy Professional Society, and its members, are pleased to support your legislation for rapid acquisition of directed energy weapons systems. The "Directed Energy Weapons Acquisition Act of 2016" will enable the accelerated development and transition of directed energy capabilities for the Department of Defense.

Rapid acquisition authority will ease the typical requirements development and acquisition process for this innovative technology. Requirements writers "don't know what they don't know". With the introduction of any new technology, there is a reluctance to embrace the risk that inherently comes with new technology. Such was the resistance to implement such technologies as precision-guided munitions, GPS navigation, and stealth capabilities, which are now common-place within the Department of Defense weapon systems. The best way to kick-start this process is to get systems into the hands of the war fighters so that they can appreciate the value and provide the necessary feedback. Directed Energy (DE) systems must initiate this cycle since these technologies have not previously existed in war fighter inventory. New concepts of operation (CONOPS) and deployment strategies must be developed to take advantage of DE technologies. While modeling and simulations (war gaming) show very promising contributions from DE in the battle scenarios, there are real world policy and doctrine that must accompany these new weapon systems. Without this legislation, directed energy technology will continue to be "five years away" from fielding and implementation into our defense capabilities.

The establishment of the Joint Directed Energy Program Office will allow a single point of contact within the Department of Defense for directed energy and initial fielding of these capabilities. We are pleased to see this disruptive technology proceed from the laboratories and test ranges into operational systems. This legislation compliments the Congressional direction in the 2001 Floyd D Spence NDAA, sections 241-250, that established the Joint Technology Office. Now that the directed energy technologies have matured into several highly-successful demonstrations, against difficult and asymmetric threats, the time is right to transition these technologies into capabilities for the Department of Defense. Recent successful demonstrations include the Air Force's Counter-electronics High Power Microwave Advanced Missile Project (CHAMP), the Army's High Energy Laser Mobile Tactical Truck (HELMTT, formerly HELMD) negation of an unmanned aerial system, and the Navy's Laser Weapons Systems (LaWS) deployment on the USS Ponce`.

Another important aspect to consider is the Directed Energy industrial base across the United States. Multi-unit purchases spur industry investment. All these factors point to the rapid progression of directed energy technology into a demonstrated capability in order to augment and improve current operational systems. DEPS wants to express our gratitude for the leadership you both have shown for this innovative technology.

Mark W. Neice
Executive Director

The Directed Energy Professional Society's mission is to foster research and development of Directed Energy technology for national defense and civil applications through professional communication and education